



Nightmares

Psychoeducation

1. **Ask Veteran** about their understanding and beliefs as to why they are having nightmares. The aim is to *build* on their understanding.

2. **Provide generic example of a threat** (grizzly bear, fire in the home) and **discuss natural reactions to this threat** (fight, flight, freeze). Highlight fight or flight's importance in keeping us safe and alive when there's a threat present.

3. **Explore fight or flight's relationship to sleeping when there's a threat present.**

- When there is an ongoing threat it is safer for us not to sleep too soundly, or not to sleep at all.
- When there is an ongoing threat it is important for your brain to rehearse, remember, and maintain a sense of danger—even while asleep.

4. Sometimes when we experience trauma our fight or flight “dimmer switch” doesn't ever fully return to “0,” so we continue to react as though the threat is still present—even when it's not. **Treating nightmares helps our mind and body realize the threat is no longer present**, so it can turn the fight or flight “switch” back down at night.

5. **Ask whether this explanation fit's the Veteran's personal experience?** If so, how? If not, in what ways is it different?